

Walter Hyleck

“Many artists, including myself, spend much time solving problems. For the most part they are hypothetical in nature and rarely resolved as solutions. It’s time to realize that artists invent problems for their own sake. Artists are problem makers.”

Walter Hyleck grew up in Beloit, Wisconsin. He earned a degree in art and art history from the University of Minnesota. He received a master’s degree from Tulane University in New Orleans. He became an art professor at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. In 1970, he started the Ceramic Apprenticeship Program. Students in the program learned technical skills in pottery. A resident professional potter taught them how to design and sell their own work. Many students from the program became successful craftspeople and teachers. Hyleck guided the program for 38 years, until he retired.

Hyleck also continued to produce his own work. His work was in many exhibits. His work is in many museums across the country. It is even in the Ceramic Art Gallery in New South Wales, Australia.

Hyleck is known for his ability to express abstract ideas through form, texture, and color. As a professor, he insisted that his students develop excellent skills. They had to learn to make pots with walls that are not too thin or too thick. At the same time, he encouraged them to develop their own artistic vision in design.

This piece is called “The Swimmer Learns to Drown in Spite of Her Fear of Water.” What visual images do you see?

